

In Memory of
U.S. Army Private
Milford Carl Belt

Oglala, South Dakota
Shannon County
January 6, 1933 – November 24, 1951
Killed in Action in Korea



(Picture on right: Frank Willard Marshall, left, and Milford Belt, right)

Milford Carl Belt was born January 6, 1933, at Oglala, Shannon County, South Dakota to Esther Kate Marshall. He was the oldest of nine children born to Esther Kate. Milford was raised in part by his grandfather, Frank Belt, and his grandmother, Hazel, in Oglala. His mother lived in Crawford, Nebraska, with his half-siblings: Melvin White Magpie, Willard Marshall, and Theda Marshall. There were other half-siblings who were stillborn or died in infancy: a set of unnamed twins were stillborn; a boy, Adam Pete, lived to the age of six months; a boy, David Wayne, and a girl, Esther Kate, were also stillborn. From 1940 to 1951, Milford attended boarding school at Oglala. He went to O.C. High School in Pine Ridge for a time. Milford's sister, Theda, remembers in the summer during school vacation she went horseback riding with him and that Willard spent a summer with Milford at the Belt home in Oglala. She recalled later seeing him after he entered the Army, and he seemed "different, grown up."

Milford enlisted in the Army and entered active service in April of 1951 at Sioux Falls and was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington. On September 18, 1951, Belt was sent overseas to Korea as a member of the 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division. Theda remembers that Milford sent her a beautiful jacket from Korea or Japan and that Willard received a seventeen-jewel watch. Private Milford Belt was killed in action on November 24, 1951, in Korea. His body was later returned to the United States, and he was buried with military honors at St. John's Cemetery north of Oglala. Theda remembers her mother's crying "early in the morning and the last thing I heard before sleeping." According to Theda, it was particularly hard on Esther because Milford's casket was sealed, and there was no chance to view his body and be sure he was really gone. Several years later, on January 27, 1955, Milford's mother, Esther Kate Marshall, died and was buried beside him.

Among Private Belt's awards were the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Korean War Service Medal.

This entry was respectfully submitted by Sheila Hansen, teacher, Spearfish Middle School, Spearfish, South Dakota. Information for this entry was provided by the ABMC, an application for a SD veteran's bonus, the South Dakota National Guard Museum, and the Belt/Marshall family, via Theda (Marshall) Babby, sister.